

JESUS AND HIS BRETHREN

NO. 2516

A SERMON

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*“Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him;
and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me.*

And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?

And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near.

And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

*Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither:
for God did send me before you to preserve life.”*

Genesis 45:1-5

I NEED not say to you, beloved, who are conversant with Scripture, that there is scarcely any personal type in the Old Testament which is more clearly and fully a portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ than is the type of Joseph. You may run the parallel between Joseph and Jesus in very many directions, yet you need never strain the narrative so even much as once. I am not about to attempt that task on the present occasion, but I am going to take this memorable portion of the biography of Joseph and to show you how, in making himself known to his brethren, he was a type of our Lord revealing himself to us.

It seems that, at last, Joseph could bear the suspense no longer. He knew who his brethren were, he knew which was Benjamin, and which was Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and the rest, and he remembered all the story of their early days together. But they did not know him. They thought him some mysterious potentate, some great ruler of the land of Egypt—as indeed he was, but they did not know so much about him as he knew about them. Consequently, there was a distance between him and them, and his loving heart ached to bridge that gulf by manifesting himself to them. It is the way of love to desire to make itself known.

Now, in a still higher sense, the Lord Jesus Christ knows all about those in this place whom He has redeemed with His precious blood. The Father gave them to Him from before the foundation of the world and He took them into covenant relationship with Himself or ever the earth was. Often has He thought of these as His beloved ones. His delights have been with the sons of men and He has looked forward and foreseen all that would happen to them. Ever since these redeemed and chosen ones have been born into the world, He has watched them so carefully that He has counted the very hairs on their heads. They are so precious to Him, as the purchase of His heart's blood, that they have never taken a single wandering step but His eye has tracked the mazes of their life.

He knows them altogether—knows their sins, knows their sorrows, knows their ignorance of Him, knows how, sometimes, that ignorance has been willful, and they have continued in the dark when they might have walked in the light—and now, at this moment, speaking after the manner of men, the heart of Christ aches to manifest Himself to some of them, He wants to be known, He thirsts to be known, He can only be loved as He is known, and He pines for love, and so He pines to manifest Himself to His loved ones.

Ay, and there are some of them who know Him already in a measure, but their measure is a very little one. It is but as a drop compared with the great deep sea. I have been praying, and am praying still, and I am not alone in the prayer, that this very hour the Lord Jesus may be pleased to manifest Himself to His own blood-bought ones. To all who have been called by His grace already, and to many not yet called to Him, may He come in the fullness of His own glorious revelation and make Himself known. For know you not this—that the revelation of Christ in the Word will not save you unless Christ is revealed in you and to you personally?

Nay, more than that—the Christ born at Bethlehem will not save you unless that Christ is formed in you the hope of glory, He must Himself come to *you* and make Himself known to you. It will not suffice you to read about His healing the sick. He must touch *you* with His hand, or you must touch the hem of His garment with your hand. But somehow there must be personal contract between yourself and the Lord Jesus Christ, or else all that He did will avail nothing to you. Let this be our prayer now—that to each man and woman and child here the Lord may graciously make Himself known.

I. Notice, first, that THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, LIKE JOSEPH, REVEALS HIMSELF IN PRIVATE FOR THE MOST PART.

Joseph cried, “Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.” It would not have been seemly for this great ruler to lose all command of himself in the presence of the Egyptians. His heart was carried away with love to his brothers and the cry that he lifted up was so loud that the people in other parts of the palace could hear that something strange was going on!

But he could not bear that they should all stand around and gaze with curious eyes upon their ruler as he revealed himself to his brothers. They would not have understood it, they might have misrepresented it. At any rate, he could not bear that the scene of affection which was now to be enacted should be witnessed by strangers, so he cried, “Cause every man to go out from me.”

My dear friends, do you really want savingly to see and know the Lord Jesus Christ? Have you ever beheld Him by the eye of faith? Then, permit me to exhort you to be *literally much alone*—much alone in searching the Scriptures, and much alone in private, secret prayer. That gracious revelation of Himself to you as bearing your sins and putting away your guilt, will not be likely to come to you until you get a little time in private, where you can quietly meditate upon your Lord and His great atoning work.

The mischief of this busy London is that we are fretted and worn with incessant occupations—we should all of us be much stronger and better if we saw less of the faces of men and more of the face of God. But for a penitent sinner who desires to behold his pardon written in the smiling countenance of Christ, there must be solitude. You must rise earlier in the morning and get a half-hour to yourself then, or you must sit up later at night, or you must steal out of bed at the dead of night, or you must even resolve that you will not go to your business until the first business of finding Christ is ended once for all!

I feel persuaded that with some of you at least, there will be no peace to your heart, and no comfortable sight of Christ, until you have gone upstairs and said, “Here, alone, with every man put out and every wandering thought excluded, will I bow the knee and cry, and look, and hope, and believe until I can say, ‘I have seen the Lord! I have looked to Him whom I have pierced and I have seen my sin put away by His death upon the tree.’”

Further, I want you to notice not only the excellence of solitude in general, but *the benefit of a kind of mental solitude*. Brethren, if in the house of God, in the midst of the assembly, the Lord Jesus Christ is ever to manifest Himself personally to us, it must be in a kind of mental and spiritual solitude. I believe that the preacher will never succeed in winning a soul if he tries to make himself prominent in his own preaching.

An old man who was accustomed to catching trout in a certain stream, was asked by one who had been fishing in vain, “Have you caught any fish today?” “Yes, sir,” he said, “I have a little basketful.” “Oh!” said the other, “I have been fishing all day long and I have taken none.” “No,” said the man, “but

there are three rules about catching trout, which, perhaps, you have not observed. The first is—Get quite out of sight. And the second is—Get still more out of sight. And the third is—Get still more out of sight than that—and you will catch them.”

And I believe that it is just so in preaching. If the preacher can get quite out of sight, still more out of sight, and yet still more out of sight, then he will be the means of bringing souls to Christ. And you, dear friends, will only see Him well in any kind of preaching when you try to forget the man. I mean that remark to apply in two ways. Perhaps the preacher is one whom you dearly love and you expect much from him. Well then, forget him, expect nothing from him, and look away from him to your Lord.

Or perhaps, the preacher’s voice has no particular charm for you, the man is not very bright in his utterances. Well, forget him and try to see his Master. Forget the preacher for good and for bad, for better and for worse, and get to the Lord Himself.

There is a story told of Mr. Erskine having preached on one occasion before the communion, and a good woman, a child of God, heard him with such delight and was so much fed and satisfied, that she left her own pastor and went some miles on the next Lord’s-day to go and hear him again. That morning, he was dreadfully dry and barren, or at least she thought that he was. There was no food for her whatever, and being not a very wise woman, she went in to tell him so.

She said, “Oh, Mr. Erskine, I heard you at the communion with such delight. You seemed to take me to the very gates of heaven and I was fed with the finest of the wheat. So I have come this morning on purpose to hear you, and I confess that I have got nothing out of you!” So he said, “My good woman, what did you go for last Sabbath-day?” “I went to the communion, sir.” “Yes, you went to the communion. That was to have communion with the Lord?” “Yes,” she said, “I did.” “Well,” said Mr. Erskine, “that is what you went for and you got it—and the Lord blessed my word to you, and you had communion with Him. Now, what did you come here for this morning?” “I came to hear you, sir.” “And you have got what you came for, for you have heard me, and found that I am a poor, dry, sapless thing, there is nothing in me.”

Think of this story when you are remembering the Lord’s servants and forgetting their Master Himself. I do believe that, as you are sitting here, you whose eyes have already been opened by the Spirit of God, if you will but say, “Cause every man to go out from me. Shut the door, I have entered into my closet even while in the pew. I am alone, now, and I desire to see no man save Jesus, only.” You shall see Him, for He manifests Himself to His people all alone. Oh, that each one here would say, “There is nothing but Christ that I desire to see, there is nothing else I wish to remember, I would think only of my Lord Jesus. May He be pleased to reveal Himself to me!”

II. The second remark I have to make is this—when the Lord Jesus Christ reveals Himself to any man for the first time, it is usually in the midst of terror, and THAT FIRST REVELATION OFTEN CREATES MUCH SADNESS.

When Joseph made himself known to his brethren and said to them, “I am Joseph,” “they were troubled at his presence.” Judah had made a very plaintive speech when it was threatened that Benjamin should be detained in Egypt, and all the brothers were in deep trouble, so that, when the great ruler said to them, “I am Joseph,” they were not filled with joy by his words, so we read, “His brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.” He was Joseph, their brother, and he loved every one of them—yet, “they were troubled at his presence.” It was the best thing that could have happened to them to be in the presence of him who was sent of God to save their lives with a great deliverance. Yet, “they were troubled at his presence.”

And you and I recollect, perhaps, when, under a deep sense of sin and sorrow, we had our first perception of Christ’s salvation—instead of being glad at it, we were “troubled at his presence.” “Why!” we said to ourselves, “this Christ is He whom we have despised, and rejected, and crucified.” There did not seem, at first, much comfort for us in the manifestation of Christ. One said, in order to cheer us, “He died for sinners.” “But,” we answered, “surely not for such sinners as we are.”

Even the very sound of that blessed word “salvation” grated on our ears, because we thought we should be like the fabled Tantalus—up to our necks in water which we could not drink, or surrounded by fruit which we could not pluck. “He may have died for others,” we seemed to say, “but scarcely for us.” We “were troubled at his presence.”

Even the house of God, to which we continued to go, was a place of terror to us and we cried, like Jacob did at Bethel, “How dreadful is this place!” In the worst sense of that word, it really was “dreadful” to us—full of dread, although we believed it to be “none other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven.”

We said, “What right have we to be in the house of God? How can we expect to enter heaven even though its gate is so near to us?” We heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, but we sorrowfully exclaimed, “Ah, that is only too true! He will pass by, He will never stop to look at us.” We heard that precious text, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” yet we said, “What is it to believe in Him? How can we believe in Him?” The light seemed shining all around us, but our eyes were blind to it! The music of heaven was sounding in all its sweetness, but our ears were closed to its melody. Everlasting love was coming near to us, yet our hearts did not open to receive it, and therefore we could not answer Christ, for we “were troubled at his presence.”

Dear friends, if any of you are in this sad state, do not therefore be driven away from our Jesus, our greater Joseph, but still stand in His presence, even though you are troubled at it, for that experience, though it be bitter, is a bitter sweet. There may be trouble in Christ’s presence, but there is a far greater trouble in being driven from His presence, and from the glory of His power.

So keep standing just where you are, even though you stand trembling, for by-and-by, and perhaps this very hour, He will graciously reveal Himself to you and you shall no longer tremble at His presence, but on the contrary, you shall rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory, as you perceive that this Joseph, this Jesus, is your Brother, your Savior, your Friend, your all in all!

II. Now, thirdly, though the first appearance of Jesus, like that of Joseph, may cause sadness, THE FURTHER REVELATION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST TO HIS BRETHREN BRINGS THEM THE GREATEST POSSIBLE JOY.

If you look at this passage when you are at home, you will perhaps say to yourself, “The second time that Joseph spoke to his brethren, he had not much more to say than he said the first time. For then he said, ‘I am Joseph; does my father yet live?’ And the second time there was as much the same burden in his language, ‘I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.’”

So, when Christ reveals Himself in grace to any poor heart, *the revelation, for substance, is much the same as at the first, yet there is a great difference.* When, for the first time, I heard the Gospel to my soul’s salvation, I thought that I had never really heard the Gospel before, and I began to think that the preachers to whom I had listened had not truly preached it. But on looking back, I am inclined to believe that I had heard the Gospel fully preached many hundreds of times before, but that this was the difference—I then heard it as though I heard it not—and when I did hear it, the message may not have been any more clear in itself than it had been at former times, but the power of the Holy Spirit was present to open my ears and to guide the message to my heart.

O dear friend, if you have heard me preach Christ crucified and you have not yet seen Christ to your soul’s salvation, I pray that you may do so now! I do not suppose that there will be any difference in the sermon, or in the truth proclaimed. The difference will be that in the one case it has not reached your heart, and in the other case it will. O blessed Master, speak comfortably to the hearts of sinners and to the hearts of Your people, too! Make the old, old Gospel be new to us by clothing it with a new power within our hearts and consciences, and throughout our lives!

Yet, there were some differences in the words which Joseph uttered to his brethren. If you turn again to the narrative, you will see that he began his second speech by saying to them, “Come near to me, I pray you.” *There was a longing for nearness to those he loved* and that is the point of my sermon at this

time. I want you, who do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but who are, nevertheless, His elect, His redeemed ones, to come near to Him now by an act of faith and trust Him with yourselves, your souls, your sins, and everything else. Stand not back through shame or fear, you chief of sinners, for He says, "Come near to me, I pray you. 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'" As for you who are His brethren already, come near to Him, for to you also He says, "Come near to me, I pray you."

Oh, if our Lord were actually here in bodily presence—and I can almost picture Him in the loveliness and glory of divine majesty—if He were to stand here and say to us, "Come near to me, I pray you," we would, with solemn reverence, bow before Him and we would with joyful obedience come near to Him, and try to hold Him by the feet and worship Him. Would not each one of you press forward to come near to Him? I am sure that you would.

Well, that is what you have to do in a spiritual fashion. We know not Christ after the flesh, but we do know Him after the Spirit. So, come near to Him, dear brethren in Christ. Believe in Him again as you did at the first, look to Him again as if you had never looked before. Worship Him as your Lord and your Redeemer. Prostrate yourselves before Him and adore Him as the Son of God revealed in our midst—come near to Him.

Then talk to Him. Tell Him all that is in your inmost heart. Unburden to Him your cares and your doubts. Ay, and come near to Him with your fondest affection and say to Him now, in the silence of your spirit, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Come near to Christ with all your tears of penitence, come near with your alabaster box of gratitude, come near with the kisses of your lips of love, come near with your whole heart's purest affection, and come now, for that is what He invites you to do. It is a part of His manifestation of Himself to you that you should endeavor to come near to Him.

Cry, "Stand back, O self! Stand back, O devil! Stand back, all care for the world! Stand back, even care for the church just now! My heart must come near unto her Lord and sit like a dove on His finger and be satisfied to look with her gentle eyes at the beauties of His countenance." God help us so to do in response to our Lord's gracious invitation, "Come near to me, I pray you."

Then, as if to help us to come near, *our Lord, in this revelation, declares His relationship to us*. The speaker in the type says, "I am Joseph your brother" and the Lord Jesus Christ, though He is Head over all things to His church, and King and Lord of death and hell, yet says to everyone who believes in Him, "I am your Brother. I am your kith and kin. Head of the family, but still of the family, and touched with the feeling of your infirmities, for I was in all points tempted like as you are."

Do not imagine, concerning the Lord Jesus, that there is only a fanciful or sentimental brotherhood between Him and you. It is a real brotherhood—there is no such brotherhood under heaven so complete and true as that which exists between Christ and every blood-washed soul, for it is not a brotherhood according to the flesh, but an everlasting, spiritual brotherhood. An eternal union of the closest and most vital kind is established between Christ and everyone who believes in Him.

We do not reckon it hard, do we, to win a brother's heart? If we have been a little cold towards a brother, his heart soon warms to us again. And as for our Lord, if we have not seen Him of late, if any of us have not loved Him as we should, if we are saying, "We are troubled at His presence, we hardly dare come to His table," may He say to us, "Come near to me, I pray you. I am your Brother. Come near, come nearer, nearer still. I am pleased when you are near." Come with your sin and your lukewarmness. Come just as you are, as you came to Him at the first, and He will receive you, and will manifest Himself unto you as He does not unto the world.

In addition to revealing his relationship, which was a great motive for Joseph inviting his brethren to come near, *he also told them a secret*. He said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." I think he mentioned that to show them that he must be Joseph their brother, for who else in all the world knew of that shameful action on their part? I do not suppose that the Midianite merchants who bought

Joseph knew that he was sold by his own brethren, or if they did know, there were none of them in Pharaoh's palace, for they were Ishmaelites and they had gone their way to traffic somewhere else.

All who knew of that wicked transaction were Joseph and his brothers, so by this password he lets them know that there was a sort of freemasonry between them. This was the sign, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." It made them blush, I dare say, and it must have made them mourn. But it also made them feel, "Yes, that is our brother. Nobody but Joseph would know that we sold him into slavery."

And, dear friends, have you ever seen your Well-beloved as He reads your heart? I have known Him read mine from the first thought in it to the last, and I have thanked Him as He has read it, for I have said, "Lord, You have read that book right through, and now You know all things, You know that I love you. Alas! I did sell you into Egypt. There was a day when I chose Egypt and its pleasures rather than Yourself, and there have been days since when I have sold You again into Egypt by treating You with lukewarmness, and giving myself up to other lovers. Yes, Lord, I have sold You to the Ishmaelites by doubting You and mistrusting You. And by my sins I have stripped You of Your many-colored garment, and by my own folly I have let You go away from Your Father's house and from the chamber of her that bore You. You know all this, my Lord, but I know You, too, because You know me so well."

Then notice that when Joseph thus revealed himself to his brethren, he did not say more till *he had sweetly put away all their offenses against him*. They had been troubled because they knew that they had sold him into Egypt, but he said to them, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither." That was a blessed way of saying, "I freely and fully forgive you."

So Jesus says to His loved ones, who have grieved Him by their evil deeds, "Be not grieved, for 'I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins.' Be not angry with yourselves, for I will receive you graciously and love you freely. Be not angry with yourselves, for your sins, which are many, are all forgiven. Go and sin no more. For My name's sake will I defer My anger. Wherefore, 'Come now, and let us reason together: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'"

Many of you know the way our Savior talks. I pray that He may just now make every believer sure that there is not a sin against him in God's Book of Remembrance. May you, dear friends, be clear in your conscience from all dead works! May you have the peace of God which passes all understanding to keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, and in the clear white light of your Savior's glorious presence, may you see the wounds He endured when suffering for your sins! Then will you sing with the disciple whom Jesus loved, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Last of all, Joseph was not satisfied with thus revealing himself to his brethren, and assuring them of his forgiveness, but *he promised them rich supplies for the future*. To my mind, this was the next best news to his message of forgiveness. He said to them, in effect, "You have had two years of famine. It is only through me that you have been preserved alive. You have come down to Egypt with your asses and your sacks, and you have taken home provender to my father and to your households. But there are yet five more years in which there will be no plowing and no harvest. What will become of you? What little you had in store is already all consumed. God has sent me here that through those five years, I may nourish you. You shall come down and live in Goshen, on the fat of the land of Egypt, and you shall never have any need, for all the treasures of the land of Egypt are mine, and I will take care of you, you shall never know any lack."

In like manner, beloved, your Lord stands and says to you, "You will have many more troubles yet." Some of my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, who are here, will be in heaven before five more years have expired. They have good reason to be very grateful to God. But to some of us who are younger, it may be that God has appointed many a year to abide here. But our Savior lives.

*“He is at the Father’s side,
The Man of love, the Crucified,”*

and the arrangements of providence are in His hands and all that providence shall be overruled for us. “No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” You will be in Egypt for a while longer, dear friend, but you will be in the Goshen of Egypt, and the good of all the land is yours. Oh, what a blessing it is to think that we have a Brother who reveals Himself to us as the Universal Provider, who will not let us have a want, but will take care that, before our need comes, the supply shall be ready and we shall have nothing to do but to rejoice in Him who cares for us!

Let not that sweet thought take away from your minds what I want to be the center of all the meditation, namely, that you should come near to your Lord. We never use a crucifix—we should think it sinful to do so. Neither do I want to have an imaginary crucifix, by trying to set Christ before you so that you should picture Him mentally. But I want your faith to do much more than imagination can. The Lord Jesus Christ is spiritually here in the midst of us, according to His gracious promise, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” And He hears me speaking these words at this moment—I am as sure of it as if I saw that mystic presence with my natural eyes. If I did see Him, I know that I would fall at His feet as dead, and the rest of this service would have to be spent in awe-struck silence by everyone that did behold Him.

But O Thou Son of God and Son of Mary, Jesus Christ our Savior, we trust You wholly and alone to save us, and we love You with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. And as we live *by* You, we pray You to help us to live *for* You, to live *to* You, to live *like* You, and by-and-by to live *with* You! We could almost wish that we might now fall down and kiss Your dear feet, but You are not here in visible presence, for You have gone up into glory. But You are here spiritually and we come to You and say, “Lord, You are ours, and we are Yours. We will hold You and will not let You go.”

*“Sun of my Soul, Thou Savior dear,
It is not night if Thou be near.”*

Come, stay with me while yet the evening shade shall linger, till death’s dark night comes on and then, instead of night, let the morning break upon my gladdened eyes because it is Yourself that has come, the life, the resurrection, and not death at all!

Come, beloved, can you not get nearer to your Lord? Can you not speak familiarly with Him? Can you not whisper into His ear the story of your love?

“Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove”

and help us now to come near to Jesus! Amen and Amen!

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON

GENESIS 45:1-13 AND SONG OF SOLOMON 1:1-7; 3:1-5

Genesis 45:1-2. *Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him: and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud:*

Emotion long pent up grows violent and when at last it bursts forth, it cannot be restrained. “He wept aloud.”

2-3. *And the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.*

What a rush of thoughts must have passed through their minds when they remembered all their unkind behavior toward him! There is no wonder that “they were troubled at his presence.”

4. *And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you.*

He pleads with them, he who was far greater than they—a prince among peasants—now prays to them, and is it not wonderful that the Lord Jesus, our infinitely-greater Brother, at times pleads with us, even as He said to the woman at the well, “Give me to drink”? Joseph said unto his brethren, “Come near to me, I pray you.”

4-5. *And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.*

“You did very wrong, but I say nothing about that, for I want you to notice how God has overruled your action, how your sin has been made to be the means of your preservation and the preservation of many besides. ‘God did send me before you to preserve life.’”

6. *For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years in which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.*

There were to be five more dreary years of utter desolation and want.

7. *And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*

How wonderfully those two things meet in practical harmony—the free will of man and the predestination of God! Man acts just as freely and just as guiltily as if there were no predestination whatever. And God ordains, arranges, supervises, and overrules just as accurately as if there were no free will in the universe. There are some purblind people who only believe one or other of these two truths, yet they are both true and the one is as true as the other.

I believe that much of the theology which is tinged with free will is true, and I know that the teaching which fully proclaims electing love and sovereign grace is also true—and you may find much of both of these truths in the Scriptures. The fault lies in trying to compress all truth under either of those two heads.

These men were verily guilty for selling their brother, yet God was verily wise in permitting him to be sold. The inference which Joseph draws from their misconduct is, of course, an inference of love. Love may not be always logical, but it is sweetly consoling, as it must have been in this case.

8. *So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.*

See how Joseph traces God’s hand in his whole career?

9. *Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus says thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:*

See how love attracts. Joseph must have his brothers near him, now he wants to have his father also near. “Go up to my father, and say unto him, ‘Come down unto me.’” See how great love turns pleader again. He who said to his brothers, “Come near to me,” sends to his father the message, “Come down unto me.”

10. *And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children’s children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast.*

Our common saying, “Love me, love my dog,” is very true. Love me, love even my flocks and my herds. So the blessing of God extends to all His chosen people have—not only to their children, but to all that they possess.

11-13. *And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.*

Love is impatient to have the object of its affection brought near.

Now we will read two short portions out of the Song of Solomon, from which you will see how love evermore craves for nearness to the loved one. The Song opens thus—

Song of Solomon 1:1-4. *The song of songs, which is Solomon's. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine. Because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee.*

Still is love pleading, you see, but here it is the other side pleading for nearness, the lowly one crying for help to get nearer to the heavenly Bridegroom. “Draw me, we will run after thee.”

4-5. *The King hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee. I am black, but comely, O you daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.*

The spouse was black in herself—sunburnt through her toil and hard suffering, yet lovely in the sight of her Beloved, and comely to look upon “as the curtains of Solomon.”

6-7. *Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but my own vineyard have I not kept. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest,—*

Still is there that same craving for nearness to the Beloved. Since we love Christ, we desire to be with Him, we cannot bear His absence. “Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest,”—

7. *Where thou make thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?*

See, dear friends, how this same seeking after the Beloved comes out in another shape in the third chapter of the Song.

Song of Solomon 3:1. *By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.*

Sometimes, the most eager search does not at once obtain its end. For wise reasons, Christ sometimes hides Himself from His seeking people.

2-5. *I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little while that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. I charge you, O you daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field,—*

“By everything that is timid, and delicate, and pure, and full of love, I charge you, O you daughters of Jerusalem,”—

5. *That ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.*

“I have found my Beloved, and I would not lose Him again. He has come to me, so I will not grieve Him and drive Him away.” That is the one strain of our reading—“Come near to me, I pray thee; and when you come near me, keep by me still.”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—784, 766, 806

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.